



On the Road to Success: Rome, New York's East Rome Business Park



What began as a \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment Pilot in Rome, New York, has become a successful redevelopment project that has leveraged more than \$4 million in assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment funding and may lead to as many as 300 new jobs. A new access road through the East Rome Business Park has already been completed, and a 17-acre core property in Rome has been subdivided into six parcels ready for development. Prospects look bright for this site that once carried the stigma of a contaminated brownfield.

ROME, NY

The East Rome Business Park lies within the heart of what was once Rome's historically industrial zone and has long been referred to by the community as the old General Cable complex. Many years ago, the site was home to a metals processing plant. Since the departure of General Cable in the mid-1960s, the vacant and abandoned buildings, combined with the site's vague reputation as "contaminated," have scared off potential developers. Community residents also suffered from fears of contamination, as well as from the blight caused by this abandoned property.

The bleak outlook for this stretch of land improved dramatically in June 1996, when EPA selected the city to receive funding under its

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JUST THE FACTS:

- Leveraged more than \$4 million in assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment funding.
- Completed a new access road through the East Rome Business Park.
- Leveraged a \$2.8 million cleanup of 17-acre brownfield site.

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EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

Brownfields Pilot program. The investigative results that came out of the Pilot program, along with the planning work and community outreach efforts, provided the tools necessary to further the brownfields initiative.

The Pilot leveraged further assistance from the State of New York, which provided funding for \$200,000 worth of follow-up assessments on the property and granted \$1.8 million for cleanup through Governor Pataki's 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. The cleanup project occurred in two stages. The first was an above-ground operation to demolish a number of buildings on the site and remove asbestos. The second stage went below ground to remove six underground storage tanks, clean up numerous soil "hot spots," and clean up various tunnels and utility lines. In addition to the assessment and cleanup funds leveraged from the state, the property owner invested nearly \$1 million of his own money in demolition and cleanup. The City of Rome also received nearly \$1 million from the New York Department of Transportation's Industrial Access Program to build an access road through the business park, and the city leveraged \$300,000 from the Empire State Development Corporation for modernization of utilities along the new access road.

With cleanup and infrastructure improvements completed, the site is now ready to welcome new business to the East Rome Business Park. The property owner has subdivided the property into six parcels, one of which is a city right-of-way for the access road. The Canterbury Printing Complex, located on the border of the neighboring industrial area, is planning to expand into the new park. Other businesses are in negotiations to relocate into the area. Some of those businesses had been waiting for the access road to be completed before proceeding.

Although the Brownfields Pilot officially ended in 1998, the progress it enabled in the East Rome Business Park continues to benefit the city. Enthusiasm for this redevelopment effort has been tremendous, particularly from neighboring residential areas plagued by high poverty and unemployment rates for decades. Estimates for employment within the finished industrial park reach as high as 300 new jobs. Resulting expansion and new business will also add significantly to the city's tax base. For more information on the Rome Brownfields Pilot, contact Robert Alvey at (212) 637-3258.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

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